



## California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	<b>02-28-01</b>	Interpretation #	<b>01-003</b>
Topic	<b>Modular Ancillary Hospital Units</b>		
Code Section(s)			
Requested by	<b>Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development</b>		
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### **Scenario:**

Hospitals and other health care providers are looking for alternate ways of providing patients with state-of-the-art diagnostic and therapeutic care without purchasing the expensive equipment themselves. These services may include such as dialysis, MRI/CT scanning, radiological procedures, laser treatments, ultrasonic evaluations, etc. One practical way to utilize this highly-specialized equipment is through contract or shared services.

Several companies have designed relocatable diagnostic or treatment units which can be moved between host hospitals on a routine or intermittent basis. From the exterior, these units may resemble a small modular office, mobile home or relocatable classroom on wheels. Frequently, they are designed to be totally self-sufficient [including diesel generator, exiting platform with stairs and lift, etc.] so that they may be located in areas which do not have utilities connected directly to the host hospital building. These units are typically of Type II-NR or Type V-NR construction.

### **1. Are these units subject to the provisions of the CBC?**

Yes. The intent of these units is to provide in-patient and/or out-patient diagnostic or treatment services. Because of the nature of the equipment used or services provided, during an emergency, the patients are frequently not easily able to immediately exit on their own. While these modular units may be fitted with wheels for easy relocation, their purpose and use fits the description of a building. Thus, they are subject to design, plan review, inspection, licensing/certification and permit requirements applicable to more conventional facilities.

2. **If these units are located immediately adjacent to the host hospital building, what fire/life safety protection must be provided?**

We cannot answer this question directly because each host facility is unique in design, construction, and safety features. However, items of construction type, occupancy designation, proximity protection, flame spread, automatic extinguishing systems, exposure protection, exiting from both the main building and modular unit, etc., should be evaluated by the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development or AHJ to assure that the modular unit's location does not compromise safety for the patients, staff and public in either the modular unit or host hospital building.